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## COMMON POORWILL HABITAT USE AND BREEDING ECOLOGY IN WESTERN MONTANA

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We know relatively little about Common Poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) natural history or habitat needs in Montana. Most published range maps do not show them occurring west of the Continental Divide in Montana. However, surveys targeting other birds led to numerous incidental detections of Common Poorwills on the MPG Ranch, a private conservation property in the Sapphire Mountains just south of Missoula. In 2015 we started a pilot project on the MPG Ranch to more closely examine poorwill distribution, habitat use, and breeding ecology. We also used Citizen Scientists from Bitterroot Audubon to survey for poorwills in other parts of the valley. On the MPG Ranch, we found poorwills widely distributed in habitats with a mixture of a shrubby overstory, steep terrain, and talus slopes. In some cases poorwills roosted and/or nested in areas with tree cover. We captured 11 individuals and tested radio telemetry techniques to approximate range size, roost use, and site fidelity. We monitored activity at six nests and deployed motion-sensing cameras when possible to observe nesting behavior. We also used acoustic monitors and roadside observations to document arrival and departure dates. We plan to expand this project in 2016.